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Red Rose Atari Members Newsletter

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RED ROSE ATARI MEMBERS (R.A.M.) is an organization of ATARI computer enthusiasts. The General meeting is held on the second TUESDAY of the month at MILLERSVILLE STUDENT ACTIVITY building at 7:00 P.M. Any and all articles in this newsletter may be reprinted so long as formal credit is given to the original source.

The club Board meetings will be held on the fourth TUESDAY of the month at 7:30.

1986 OFFICERS

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PLEASE NOTE!!

All club oriented mail should be addressed to: R.A.M.

c/o Editor or whom ever

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"It is the policy of this organization that software pirating and theft of intellectual property is incompatible with the goals of R.A.M. Any member found pirating software at organizational events will be expelled." (Re: R.A.M. Constitution.)

THE WASHINGTON AREA ATARIFEST

Jim Stokes and I went to the Atarifest in Fairfax Virginia on October 25. The show was a two day affair sponsored by the Washington Area Atari Computer Enthusiasts. This is the group that produces Current Notes, the best Atari newsletter around. On Saturday the user groups that make up WACE put on demonstrations and held a swap meet, on Sunday Corporate Atari held seminars and talked to users. On both days there was a large commercial vending area. The vending area was crowded Sunday and the vendors said that Saturday was busier. I was surprised to see very little 8 bit merchandise available, there was however much more ST software there than I realized was available. The ST really seems to be blossoming. I found it a little sad to see signs of decline in 8 bit activity. I am writing this on my faithful 800. As John Levin from the SPACE group in Harrisburg said your machine isn't obsolete until it goes up in smoke. I guess the change is hard on us all. When I think about what I payed for my 8 bit equipment I realize what a good buy the ST's are. You can buy a complete system for 5 or 6 hundred dollars. For that money you get printer and modem ports, a 80 column monitor, and those nice little 3 1/2" disk drives. The point is that if you are satisfied with your 8 bit equipment fine but if you like to be where the action is, the upgrade isn't that painful.

Having said that Let me tell you about some of the neat stuff we saw. There were a lot of hard drives at the show. ICD, Astra and Atari were showing their products. The Supra drives were being sold by the dealers. The drives started at \$540 for the 20 meg Supra and went up from there in price and size. ICD was talking about a 200 meg! They had a prototype 100 meg. By the way a meg is about a million bytes. A regular floppy disk stores between 70 and 360 thousand bytes. So that you can see that you can store a lot of floppies worth on even a small hard drive. That is just the point. After considerable deliberation, Jim broke in and bought a pre-production 20 meg model for the bulletin board from ICD. Also of interest was a graphics scanner for the ST that lets you suck pictures into the ST which you can manipulate with a paint program. There were some neat devices that digitized sounds like your voice and allowed you to play the sound through your synthesizer. Strange sounds.

There were quite a few Atari celebrities at the show. I got a Kick out of meeting some of the people who's names I had read in the magazines. Neil Harris and Sandy Austin from Atari, David Small of Magic Sac fame, David Ahl from Atari Explorer just to drop a few names. We had a good chance to talk to Keith Ledbetter who wrote the express programs and who now works for ICD. He showed us his new bulletin board program for the ST. I guess Jim was impressed because he got it to run his BBS on.

In all it was an interesting show and well worth the trip to Washington. We can all look forward to the reincarnation of Jim's Co-op which will be running of a 1040 with a new 20 meg hard drive from ICD and new software. Hope to see you at the next meeting.

Chris Long

SHORT NOTES

By
Jim Stokes

Welcome to another Short Notes, this month we have rumors of a hardware IBM emulator for the Mega, Atari's new workstation and their new CD Rom which was announced in London. On the local front you can read about the re-emergence of Jim's Co-op and news about the club nominations at the November meeting.

Nominations for club officers will be the big topic of discussion at the next meeting. The offices available are President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer 8 bit Librarian and ST Librarian. If you have someone you would like to nominate check with them before the meeting, no one will be nominated without their permission and if you wait until the meeting and they don't attend you won't be able to ask.

Jim's Co-op should be up by the beginning of November, this time it will be sporting a 1040 ST, a 20 meg ICD hard drive and BBS Express ST software. The number will be the same, (717) 872-6068, and of course there will be plenty of room for 8 bit and ST downloads from our library.

Atari finally announced it's CD ROM player for the ST, according to the reports I've seen it can be used for either data with your computer or for music on your stereo. I haven't heard a price but Atari originally said they wouldn't produce it unless they could sell it for about \$600, it will be about 6 months before it will be available in the U.S.

The new 1200 baud modem from Atari is finally available but Atari still doesn't have the necessary cables and software to make it work with the 8 bit computers.

Supra has announced a new 10 meg floppy drive for the ST, the drive cost \$899 and requires a special disk that costs \$30.00 (the first one is included in the price of the drive). Unlike a hard drive this system allows you to swap disks when one gets filled but it runs about 1/4th of the speed of their 20 meg hard drive and costs about \$200 dollars more.

Hearings were held in Washington recently on the FCC proposal to raise access fees for modem users, the hearings were held before the House Energy and Commerce Committee, subcommittee on telecommunications. The only person speaking favorably of the change in rates was Dennis Patrick, FCC chairman, speaking against the proposal were representatives of businesses, educational institutions and hospitals. According to Allan Conner, president of DunsNet the increase in fees will "substantially drive up the cost of automatic authorization of credit cards". John Stuckey, director of Academic Computing at Northwestern University testified that "schools will be forced to cut back their use of electronic data bases for research". In addition Jaquelline Bastille, director of the medical library at Massachusetts General Hospital stated that "Cutbacks also would be forced at hospitals, where doctors rely on computerized medical data bases for quick reference". Apparently the change in rates will effect people from all walks of life, according to Edward J. Markey D-Mass., subcommittee chairman, "The FCC proposal is a genuine threat to our society".

Spectrum by Antic is now available from Antic for \$70 (I already have my copy), in addition there will be a desk accessory from the makers of Spectrum that will allow it to work with Computer Eyes, this will give you digitized pictures with 512 colors, a real breakthrough for the ST. I have a couple of sample pictures that will be

available in the library.

If you own Flash, Antic has announced version 1.5. You can upgrade your copy by sending \$5.00 and the original disk to:

Flash Update
Antic Software
544 Second ST.
San Francisco, Ca.
94107

Antic has promised that upgrades will be shipped out on the day they receive them.

Atari has developed (or had someone develop) a new version of ST Basic, it is not public domain and won't be appearing in our ST Library but is available from Atari Customer Relations, I don't know what it will cost (if anything). They send a skimpy booklet listing the new commands with the basic but you can also order a manual that goes into more detail. If anyone calls and gets more information about this please let me know.

I've heard a report that Atari has resumed work on the hardware IBM emulator, someone claimed Neal Harris (VP Atari Marketing) said as much on Genie. The report mentions that it is intended to work with the Mega to help Atari break into the business market so I don't know for sure if it will work with an ST.

It's been announced that Atari will produce its first entry into the technical workstation market with a machine that will operate at 10 MIPS (million instructions per second). The new computer will use the Inmos T-800 Transputer CPU which allows parallel processor chips, additional transputer chips can be added for more speed. Atari would like to produce the workstation for under \$5,000 but that is not a hard price at this point. The operating system for this new machine will be a Unix like system called HELLIOS, development by Perihelion Software of England. Atari will be developing proprietary coprocessor chips for music and graphics functions and will be working on a chip that will add virtual memory capability to the Inmos Transputer. Atari hopes to begin production in April or May with it initially appearing in Europe, they hope to release it in the U.S. by the end of 1988. The workstation will include a very high resolution color monitor and Atari plans to add compatibility with the Mega and ST line of computers.

There are rumors that Atari is planning to announce a 68020 add on for the Megs at the next Comdex show. Again I don't know if this will connect to the DMA port, making it usable on the ST or if it will use the Mega's expansion bus which the ST doesn't have. It's usually a sounder move to make a new product usable on as many machines as possible but we will have to wait and see. The 68020 is a 32 bit chip from Motorola which runs at 16 megahertz.

I picked up the Image Scanner at the recent Washington Atari Fest, this device hooks up to your printer and will scan an image on the printer and create a Neo or Degas picture from it. For example you could take a picture from the newspaper, put it in your printer and have the image scanned and sent to the ST where it will be put into a Degas or Neo format for inclusion in Publishing Partner or Print Shop. I'll demo it at a meetings in the near future.

Prices have gone up on the ST, there are still some machines around at the old price so if you planned on getting an ST for Christmas you will save about \$125 if you

can find one at the old price now. Both Dalle Electronics and Games and Gadgets had ST's at the old prices at this writing, I haven't checked with Main Street to see if they still have any STs at the lower price.

The Atari Laser Printer was having some chip problems but they seem to have been resolved since they are being shipped to Canada, look for the arrival in the U.S. on or about Dec. 1st. Rumors persist that Atari is negotiating with Adobe to provide Post Script with the new laser printer, in addition they are also talking to the makers of READY-SET-GO about packaging it with the laser. Using Post Script greatly facilitates changing fonts and makes the laser a much more useful tool.

FOR SALE

Call Jim Miller for prices at 872-4168

All 8-bit equipment

Disk Drives: 1050 double density, Astra double sided/double density (with top dos and 850 cable).

Printers: Atari 1027, Okemate 10.

410 recorder, 850 with modem cable and printer cable, 14" Commodore 1702 color monitor with cable, lots of software.

All in original boxes and condition like new!

Software/Hardware For Sale

First of all let me thank everyone who donated software for the club to sell, your response has been very generous. Twenty four items have been donated plus Dick Cliff has donated a nifty CPM system with several impressive software packages including Word Star, FMS 80, Move-it, Calc Star, and Spell Star. The hardware consists of a MultiTeck 504 CPM 2.2 system with a Freedom 100 terminal and includes two double sided, double density disk drives. It uses a Z-80-A chip and runs at 4 megahertz. Unfortunately the software is on 8 inch disk so the buyer will have to find someone with 8 inch drives that convert it to 5.25" format. According to Roger Kresge of the local CPM user group the system should go for \$250 unless we can get someone to port the software to 5.25" drives.

The following is a list of the donated software along with a price, remember when you buy a piece of software you are making a donation to the users group so please be generous.

Software	Price	Description
Atari Writer	\$15	
Dead Line	\$10	Infocom game
Grid Iron Glory	\$ 5	Basic football game
Disk Scanner	\$ 5	Disk Utility
F-15 Strike Eagle	\$15	Game
Silent Service	\$10	Game
Eidoleon	\$15	Lucas Film Game
Koronis Rift	\$15	Lucas Film Game
M.U.L.E.	\$15	Game
Triple Pack	\$15	3 Games
Beach Head		
Beach Head II		
Raid on Moscow		
Sky Blazer	\$10	Game
Peggamon	\$ 5	Game
Spy Hunter	\$ 5	Game
Sargon II	\$10	Chess Game
Ghost Busters	\$ 5	Game
Hacker	\$10	Game
Music Composer	\$ 5	
Advanced Music System	\$ 5	
Atari Key Pad	\$ 5	
Atari Trak Ball	\$10	
ST		
Atari ST Companion	\$ 5	Book for beginners
Compute's ST Program	\$ 8	Programs in Basic/Logo
Pawn	\$15	Game
Color Writer	\$ 5	Word Processor

Breach for the ST
or
An Exercise in Violent Creativity

Okay, so the subtitle 'An Exercise in Violent Creativity' might not be something that normally springs to mind when considering an ST game. But, believe it or not, it's an accurate description of Breach, by Omnitrend Software. Omnitrend is not exactly a premiere software company, having only released one previous ST title, Universe II. But their second ST product, Breach, falls into a genre I call 'Something Someone Somewhere Should've Seen to Sometime Sooner Since it's so Spectacular' (or So.So.So.Sh.Se.So.So.Si.Sp. for short).

Breach is basically a small-scale military construction set and role-playing game combined. The main character is the Squad Leader, controlled by you. You can create your own Squad Leader simply by choosing the 'New Leader' option from the Edit menu in the Scenario program included with Breach (more about this program later). On any of his numerous missions (depending on the Scenario itself), the Squad Leader may be accompanied by up to 19 marines, each with special skills and certain strengths and weaknesses. The classes of marine available are Marauder (your basic soldier), Scout (faster, but weaker than a Marauder), Infiltrator (good for cracking enemy computer systems), and Psionic Talent (able to inflict both normal and psionic damage to opponents).

Missions (or Scenarios, as they are referred to in Breach) may consist of anything from rescuing prisoners held by the enemy, to capturing important 'datapacks' held by same, to simply killing lots of the bad guys. Some missions may require the completion of several or all of those goals. Terrain encountered includes both exterior (heavy and light vegetation, grass, dirt, rocks, water), and interior (three types of walls, three types of doors, machinery, computer banks, furniture, workmen). Plus, many different useful objects may be found at various locations (grenades, rockets and launchers, ammo clips, medikits, gravbelts, shields). And, last but not least, various types of enemies will assault you (enemy marines, wild beasts, aliens, robot tanks, overlords, and autoguns). Once you enter the scenario with your marines (or alone) you have total control over each of their actions; from moving, to picking up or dropping objects, to shooting, etc. You must reach the goals of your mission at all costs, including the lives of your marines. But be warned! Since the Squad Leader is the main character, if he is killed during the mission the game will end immediately!

Speaking of the mission, let's talk graphics. Since the game uses a relatively small scale (each marine is about half an inch high) the graphics are in no way spectacular (mainly because of the resolution limitations of the ST). However, the graphics are more than adequate, very colorful, and represent what they are meant to represent quite nicely. The screen is set up as follows: the mission window occupies three quarters of it, the current marine's stats are also displayed, and at the bottom are eight buttons that can be clicked on to perform an action (drop an object, fire your gun, etc.). It's all very simple and logical, except for a few [Shift]-click or [Alt]-click combinations that must be gotten used to. After a short while, though, all this becomes transparent and you find yourself immersed in

frantic strategizing and plotting as the enemy assails you.

The seven scenarios provided on the Breach Scenario Disk should keep you busy for awhile-- I found them quite challenging. But in a stroke of genius, the creators of Breach also included something on the Scenario Disk which turns Breach into a game that can last forever. It's a Scenario Builder program that allows you to create an entire Scenario for yourself or your friends to play. It's completely mouse driven, and allows you to:

Design terrain-- all the types of terrain I mentioned are available...just click on the one you want to draw with, and move to the scrolling Scenario window. Paint with it as you would a Degas brush!

Place objects-- Nineteen types are available and up to thirty objects can be scattered about for use by the marines. You can even type a message that will pop up whenever the object is picked up! (example-- a prisoner might say (when rescued) "Thanks, pal! Those Commies were nasty to me!")

Write a mission briefing-- A mini word processor lets you type in a page-long briefing to tell a player the situation, goals, etc.

Set victory conditions-- You have complete control over what needs to be done to complete the scenario (you can even specify a certain percentage of the enemy that must be killed!)

Create marines-- Define how many marines will go along, their names, types, and even how skillful they are!

Lots more-- Including crack units (used by Infiltrators when they encounter an enemy computer--they can try to break in and get it to dump a map of the entire level!), enemy design (make enemies more skillful, give 'em rocket launchers, or whatever!), multiple levels (up to five), etc...etc...

I'd like to know whether Omnitrend appreciates it or not, but if they would allow owners of Breach (like myself) to copy JUST the Scenario Builder program and make it available on BBS's, etc., there would be lots of new scenarios created, and lots of people would want to buy Breach just to play the scenarios they've designed (remember, the Scenario Builder can only create, not play, missions). So Omnitrend could, by allowing user's groups to pass out the Scenario Builder, sell maybe twice the copies of Breach they sell now. I'm going to write them a letter and find out. It can't hurt, right?

In my opinion, it is the Scenario Builder program that makes Breach a cut above your garden-variety wargame. Within 48 hours of owning Breach, I'd designed a scenario that completely (well, almost) recreates the last one-third of the movie 'Aliens'. It starts out with Squad Leader Ripley, Marauders Vasquez and Hicks, and Infiltrator Hudson (he was the one who used the colony's computer, remember?) stuck in Operations with aliens everywhere. You've got to get to Medical, then find your way through a maze of ventilation shafts, drop down to an alien-infested storage level, go down again to the maze-like alien nest, find Newt, and get to Bishop and the last drop-ship before time runs out. Whew! And you know what? Designing that was the most fun I've had with my ST since...hmmm... Since I got the bleeding thing, I guess...

Anyway, Breach also includes an illustrated manual that describes everything very

POSTMAN: if undeliverable, please return to sender.

S.L.C.C.
NEWS LETTER EXCHG.
P.O. BOX 1506
SAN LEANDRO, CA 94577-0374



P. O. Box 7532, Lancaster,



...two UN-COPY PROTECTED disks (you must type in a random word from the manual every time you load the main program, though), and is a great game for anyone interested in some good, clean fun...er, that is...some good, clean exercises in violent creativity...

For the ST: Color only
Review by Eric Fulmer

NEXT MONTH: I won't even venture a guess... maybe, just maybe, I'll scrape together enough bucks to finally buy Guild of Thieves. But Dallee Electronics has been spoiling me by demo-ing Barbarian (Wow--graphics and lots of action), Airball (Microdeal strikes again!), and lots of other good stuff. Stop in and take a long look!